

Fox Jaffna: A Boutique Villa with a Rich Heritage

Posted on



Fox Jaffna, an ancestral home converted into an elegant boutique villa.

A beautiful ancestral Jaffna house has been transformed into a unique boutique villa that reflects the rich heritage and hospitality of the northern peninsula.

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Photographs Menaka Aravinda

Situated on the bustling KKS Road in Kokuvil, merely three kilometers from Jaffna town, Fox Jaffna is a stylish and elegant resort with a curated collection of art. As you step into the property, you are immediately transported in time. The first building, which is the original house, has been preserved in its true form. With a warm smile, guests are bestowed with a traditional Hindu welcome, thus making them instantly feel comfortable.

The property, which was built in 1908, maintains the distinctive architecture and design of Jaffna. It is the ancestral home of R Rajamahendran, Chairman, Maharaja Group.

Fox Resorts displays pieces by some of the best Sri Lankan artists that belong to the extensive collection of the Chairman. The property is literally 'all about art.' The property has an interesting history; firstly, the family residence, it was taken over by the LTTE during the war, and thereafter once Jaffna was liberated, it was used by the Security Forces. Following the end of the conflict, the property was returned to its original owners. Thus, remnants of its past have been incorporated to its new function as a boutique villa.

The living room of the house has been converted into the reception and lobby, yet the original design has been preserved. A staircase leads down to a war-time bunker that has been transformed into a museum featuring paintings by the likes of George Keyt, David Paynter, George Beven, Ivan Peries and Richard Gabriel. Walking through the gallery is a wonderful experience. Amidst the paintings, sections of the original wall of the bunker have been exposed for guests to see that the past is not forgotten.

From the living room, guests arrive at the verandah and courtyard. Public areas are sparsely furnished so that guests experience the space. The décor is simple and comfortable, heightening the spacious feel. High roofs and white walls reflect the Jaffna tradition. Color is provided by the unique art pieces adorning the wall. The central courtyard has been turned into a water feature, the sound of flowing water soothes the senses. The four villa rooms with en-suite bathrooms are within the old building. The interiors are comfortably furnished and decorated in subtle colors with a painting as the central feature.



Ponds and fountains enhance the cooling ambience

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As you step outside, the beautiful expansive garden greets you. It is, in fact, a pleasant surprise to witness such lush greenery near the main road itself. As was the tradition in olden days, the kitchen was separate from the main house. This has been transformed into the hotel restaurant, referred to as Chef. The original structure has been maintained, and tables are arranged so that the feeling of space is enhanced. Fox Jaffna specializes in

authentic Jaffna cuisine. Thus guests are encouraged to experience the seafood-based delicacies as well as other Sri Lankan dishes that are flavorsome in its use of aromatic spices and ingredients. Another aspect is that the bunker below the restaurant is being converted into a museum that will feature Jaffna history and heritage.

The well-manicured lawn with trees provides a cooling environment. There is an interesting landscape feature, which had previously been a flag hoisting and meeting place during the time of the war. Another bunker in the vicinity had apparently led to the Jaffna Fort but had been subsequently sealed off.

The swimming pool, which has a depth of 4.5ft creates a picturesque setting. A beautiful palmyra inspired feature can be seen on one end of the pool, and on the other, a sculpture of a sitar that had been built in the 1900s.

The 24 modern rooms are located near the swimming pool and are arranged in six blocks that are named after famous Sri Lankan artists David Paynter, Ivan Peries, Richard Gabriel, George Beven, Donald Friend, George Classen, Justin Deraniyagala and Tudor Rajapakse. All rooms are beautifully furnished in subtle tones and a painting of the respective artists is the central feature of the room.

Fox Jaffna has its own water treatment plant that provides desalinated water to the rooms. All staff employed at the hotel are from Jaffna; as such, the hotel takes special pride in their service and hospitality.

Excursions are organized according to the preference of the guests so that they can experience vibrant Jaffna as it is rich in heritage, culture, and cuisine.

Fox Jaffna is a green oasis that genuinely epitomizes the persona of Jaffna.

Fox Jaffna

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